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THE CONTRIBUTION OF ISAIAH TO HEBREW THEOLOGY

by

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INTRODUCTION

The prophet Isaiah is one of the greatest characters in the entire literature of the Old Testament. Some hold that he was the greatest of all the prophets. One is inclined to agree with that estimate when one considers the many-sided aspect of his greatness. He was an advisor and confidant of kings, especially Hezekiah. The high quality of his statesmanship has received universal recognition. As a moral reformer he was no whit less zealous and was certainly more influential than Amos, that great prophet who preceded him by a short period. One only needs to read what Isaiah wrote to be convinced of the power and beauty of his work from a purely literary point of view. He was equally great as a theologian, though this aspect of his greatness has not received as much emphasis. It is with this element of Isaiah's greatness alone that this thesis is concerned.

An attempt has been made to limit the study to the authentic work of the Eighth Century prophet. No critical question stands on firmer grounds than the view that chapters 40-66 are not the work of Isaiah ben Amoz. It is so generally accepted that these chapters are from a later period that it is unnecessary to review the evidence upon which that conclusion is based. It is also generally agreed that Isaiah did not write all of the first thirty-nine chapters, but there is a wide difference of opinion concerning the genuineness of many passages. This makes it necessary for any investigation of Isaiah's theology to deal with critical problems.

There is a second limitation of the problem. The study has been confined solely to the advance which Isaiah made over the thought of his own day. Isaiah's influence was not confined to his own day, and one of the elements of his greatness is the influence which his book had upon later ages. The scope of this thesis has not included this aspect of his contribution to theology, because it is felt that this is a separate problem and warrants separate treatment.

CHAPTER I. RELIGIOUS IDEAS IN ISAIAH'S DAY

In order to understand the importance of Isaiah's contribution to theology it is necessary to have some knowledge of the views of religion prevailing in Isaiah's day. One cannot measure the advance which Isaiah made over the religious thought of his age without knowing the religious ideas current at that time. Hence a brief discussion of that topic must precede the discussion of the work of Isaiah himself. First, let us consider the idea of God at this period. In the Eighth Century B.C. the prevailing idea of God among the Hebrews was certainly not monotheistic. The concept of Yahweh was still that of a narrow national deity rather than one of cosmic grandeur. We may suppose that the patriotic Israelite thought that Yahweh was the greatest of all gods, more powerful than all the others, and even lord over all the others. Duff believes that this conception of Yahweh was a development of the time of David, perhaps influenced by the national expansion of that period. He states, "The David-revelation was Jehovah is Supreme Lord over all other gods, powers, and nations." (1) We do not find that the current concept of Yahweh had developed beyond that to a monotheism in Isaiah's day. Furthermore, this limitation of Yahweh as a national deity also includes the idea that the nation rather than the individual was the unit with which Yahweh dealt.

One furthur aspect of the concept of Yahweh is important. The original concept of Yahweh had been modified by religious syncretism. The primitive nomadic ideal had been altered by the

(1) Duff: Old Testament Theology, p.64

incorporation of Ba'al-worship. Since the Ba'als were primarily agricultural deities, this change was a result of the Israelites themselves changing from a pastoral to an agricultural people. It finally came to be not so much the worship of Ba'al as a rival to Yahweh as the worship of Yahweh as an agricultural Ba'al. "If he was to take the place and perform the duties of the old Ba'als, it was only natural that men should assume that they could best serve him (and so, indirectly themselves) by offering to Him a worship like that which had been paid to his predecessors. While, then, the name used in worship was that of Yahweh, the details of the cultus were, we may believe, very much what they had been in Palestine from time immemorial." (1)

Let us next consider the eschatological ideas which prevailed in the time of Isaiah. There seems to have been a general belief in a "Day of Yahweh". This was conceived of as a day when Yahweh would demonstrate His majesty and power, a day when the enemies of Yahweh, who were simply the enemies of the Israelites themselves, would be completely overwhelmed and destroyed. It would be accompanied by catastrophic upheavals in nature.

The hope of immortality of this period was the limited belief contained in the concept of Sheol. The existence after death was a very shadowy and unsatisfactory affair. Sheol was conceived of as a great underground cavern to which the shades of all the departed, good or evil, went. Life in Sheol was a very limited, very unhappy sort of existence. There was no belief in future rewards and punishments. The good received their rewards in this life, and the evil their punishments. The benefits which the good

(1) Oesterley and Robinson: Hebrew Religion, p. 176

received were material rather than spiritual.

This, then, was the general religious atmosphere into which the great Eighth Century prophets came. Let us next consider the contribution which Amos made to religious thought. Some scholars hold that Amos was the first monotheist among the Hebrews. There is wide difference of opinion concerning the origin of monotheism among the Hebrews. Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, Deutero-Isaiah as well as Amos have been credited with making that important step. Albright upholds the theory that Moses was a monotheist. He bases this theory upon the idea that one would expect monotheism to arise among the Hebrews in the same period it arose among other peoples. He believes that the Aton monotheism of Akhnaton might have influenced Moses, since it flourished about a century before Moses according to his view of the chronology of the Exodus. A further argument used by him is "that the full name of YHWH, Yahweh-asher-yihweh, which means literally, 'He (who) causes to exist what comes into existence', i.e. the Creator of everything that exists, is an exact translation of a rather common Egyptian formula, applied to the chief god, who is also the creator of the world, according to Egyptian theology." (1) Albright's evidence is not conclusive and there are some grave objections to the theory. First, when Hebrew monotheism arose, it appeared to be independent of the speculative and philosophical types of monotheism of Egypt and Babylonia. Second, there is no general agreement yet concerning the chronology of the Exodus. Third, assuming that Albright is correct concerning the chronology of the Exodus, it is very improbable that Moses was influenced by the Aton belief. After

(1) Albright: The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible, p.164

the death of Akhnaton the Aton heresy very quickly died. Furthermore, if Moses was influenced by the Aton belief, the traditions concerning Mosaic religion should show more traces of that influence and more resemblances. Not only is the name of Aton not used, but the concepts of deity and the mode of worship are quite different. It is difficult to believe that the warlike Yahweh of the Song of Deborah could have arisen from the Aton of peace-loving Akhnaton. Some believe that Yahweh was originally a god of war; others hold that Yahweh was in the beginning a nature god, but unlike the nature god Aton, Yahweh was connected with nature in its more terrifying moods, either a volcanic deity or a storm-god. The very tradition which connects the Yahweh revelation to Moses with Sinai is in itself evidence against the theory of its origin in the Egyptian Aton faith.

Equally inconclusive is the alleged evidence that Elijah was the first Hebrew monotheist. This theory is based upon the contest of Elijah with the prophets of Ba'al at Mount Carmel, marked by the stirring challenge, "How long go ye limping between the two sides? if Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Ba'al, then follow him." (I Ki. 18:21). This is interpreted by Kautzsch and Mitchell as a complete rejection of the idea of Ba'al's existence, but most modern scholars do not hold that interpretation of the passage. (1) Aside from the question of its historicity, there is the possibility of the account being coloured by the later ideas of the compiler of Kings which must be taken into account. We know too little about Elijah to prove that he was the first

(1) Knudson: The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament, p.84

Hebrew monotheist. Without stronger evidence the probabilites are against it.

For our present problem it is irrelevant to discuss the relative merits of the theories that Jeremiah or Deutero-Isaiah originated Hebrew monotheism. Since they are both of a period later than Isaiah, we will turn to Amos. There are many scholars who contend that Hebrew monotheism had its beginning in the Eighth Century B.C. with Amos. Other scholars dissent from that opinion. The evidence upon which they base the conclusion that Amos is not to be credited with a strict monotheism is that he thought of lands other than Canaan as unclean (Amos 7:17) and the fact that he does not seem to have risen to the thought of God as Creator, Amos 4:13; 5:8,9 and 9:5,6 being later editorial additions. (1) There is evidence, however, that Amos made a contribution towards monotheism. In spite of his belief in the uncleanness of other lands there is in Amos a beginning of universalism, which at least paved the way for a complete monotheism. This universalism is seen in the doctrine that other nations are controlled by Yahweh. The following quotation from H.P.Smith gives a good summary of this question of the monotheism of Amos, "Whether he conceded any reality to the gods of the nations is not revealed by any utterance of his. He is not even consistent with himself, for, although he concedes that Israel has been brought up from Egypt ('you only have I known' he makes Yahweh say), yet he holds also that it is Yahweh who brought the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir (9:7). If religious thinkers in Babylon or in Egypt had

(1) Bade: The Old Testament in the Light of Today, pp.144-145

developed a speculative monotheism Amos was guiltless of any knowledge of their systems. His monotheism, if such it was, was a practical monotheism." (1) He further points out that in Amos Yahweh's power "extends beyond the boundaries of Israel, and his ethical will is enforced upon other people." (2)

Amos also made a further contribution to the concept of Yahweh in his emphasis upon the righteousness of Yahweh. The dominant note in his book is that Yahweh is a god of righteousness and demands righteousness on the part of his people. Amos' concept of the righteousness which Yahweh expected was nothing short of revolutionary. He revolted not only against the licentiousness which had crept into Yahweh worship by its contact with the Canaanite cult, but he even condemned the whole sacrificial cultus. He preached that what Yahweh wanted was justice and righteousness rather than burnt offerings. (Amos 5:21-24)

Turning from Amos' idea of God to his eschatological ideas we find that he was equally revolutionary there. Amos completely reversed the popular idea of the Day of Yahweh. He warned them not to rejoice in that hope. Because of their wickedness the Day of Yahweh will be a day of destruction for them and not merely a welcome destruction of their foes. It will be a day of terror and of woe and not one of triumph and rejoicing. (Amos 5:18-21)

The note which Amos sounded was that of doom and woe, but there is a section which pictures a brighter future. This more hopeful section is thought, however, to be the work of a later writer.

Let us now consider the contribution which Hosea made to

(1) Smith,H.P.: The Religion of Israel, pp.139-140
(2) Ibid, p. 140

religious thought. Hosea, even less than Amos, appears to be monotheistic. He was more dominated by the thought of Israel as God's chosen people. "Much more than Amos does Hosea speak of all non-Hebrew lands as unclean. Words of dislike, contempt, disgust for Assyria and Egypt are continually on his lips." (1) H.P.Smith points out that Hosea like Amos was not a monotheist but can be credited with a contribution towards monotheism. He states, "...the bitterness with which he declaims against the Ba'als indicates that he had some sort of belief in their real existence, and his declaration that other lands than Yahweh's are unclean shows that in his view other divinities had power there. Yet the vividness with which Hosea conceived the relation of Yahweh to Israel as a marriage prepared the way for monotheism, for it impressed upon the people the thought that Yahweh tolerates no rival in the affections of his people." (2)

Hosea made two important contributions concerning the idea of Yahweh. He was the first to condemn the bull-cult at Bethel. "There is no feature in Hosea's prophecy which distinguishes him from earlier prophets so sharply as his attitude to the golden calves, the local symbols of Jehovah adored in the Northern sanctuaries. Elijah and Elisha had no quarrel with the traditional worship of their nation. Even Amos never speaks in condemnation of the calves. But in Hosea's teaching they suddenly appear as the very root of Israel's sin and misery." (3)

The second important contribution is an emphasis upon an aspect of the character of God which is almost wanting in Amos.

(1) Duff, Old Testament Theology, p.95
(2) Smith, H.P.: The Religion of Israel, pp.145-146
(3) Smith, W.R.: The Prophets of Israel, p.175

Amos pictures God as righteous, but very stern and austere in his demands. Hosea also teaches that God is a righteous God, but he adds the element of love and the possibility of forgiveness is stressed. "Hosea fully shared the ethical enthusiasm of Amos. He falls not a whit behind that prophet in proclaiming Yahweh as a God who loves righteousness, champions the oppressed, punishes wickedness, and takes no delight in ritual and sacrifices; but he employs the various figures of the tenderest family relationships as symbols of Yahweh's love in his endeavor to make his contemporaries realize this hitherto unsuspected aspect of Yahweh's character- this new interpretation of the covenant of Horeb- this new motive to righteous living." (1)

Hosea goes beyond Amos in his insight into the importance of motive. Amos is concerned with outward behavior. Hosea sees that it is the inner life from which the external conduct springs. "And Yahweh's supreme demand to his mind is for a quality expressed in the Hebrew word chesed, quite untranslateable in English. It means love, but more than love, for it is not merely an attitude adopted by one person to another but the essential quality of the soul from which love, sympathy, pity, devotion, all spring." (2)

Concerning the eschatological element in Hosea there is a difference of opinion. As in Amos we have a hopeful section which is not believed by all scholars to be the work of the prophet. H.P.Smith cites 11:8f., 13:7f., and 13:14 as evidence against their genuineness. He states, "Such passages seem to leave no room for hope, and in view of them we cannot suppose those sections of the book of Hosea which predict a restoration

(1) Barton: The Religion of Israel, p.101
(2) Oesterley and Robinson: Hebrew Religion, p.207

to be genuine utterances of the prophet' (1) Barton dissents from this view. He calls attention to the fact that "Hosea had in his teaching of the love of Yahweh supplied motives for repentance, and his Messianic prophecies as they stand are conditioned on repentance." (2)

(1)Smith: The Religion of Israel, pp.144-145
(2)Barton: "The Hermeneutic Canon 'Interpret Historically' in the Light of Modern Research' in Jour. Bib. Lit., vol.33, p.68

CHAPTER II. ISAIAH'S IDEA OF GOD

Let us now consider the question of Isaiah's own religious views. Let us first ask what Isaiah's contribution was to the concept of God. The first question to be considered is whether Isaiah was a monotheist. Those scholars who trace the beginnings of monotheism in Israel to the Eighth Century prophets classify Isaiah as a monotheist, but they hold that he was preceded in this by Amos. Those who hold that Amos was not a monotheist, also deny that Isaiah was a monotheist. Since Isaiah does not give any philosophic discussion of the question, it is difficult to prove that he did or did not have a monotheistic concept of God. There is no evidence which proves that it was impossible for him to have held that view. There is some evidence which indicates the possibility, thought not the certainty, that he had made that important step for which Amos had paved the way.

He certainly can be credited with as much universalism as we found in Amos, i.e. he certainly conceived of Yahweh as controlling nations other than Israel and Judah. He speaks of the Assyrians as the rod of Yahweh's anger (10:5). Yahweh raises his standard and hisses for the nations whose obedience is swift and unquestioned (5:26; 7:18). There is a possibility that Isaiah went beyond the universalism of Amos, that he conceived of Yahweh not merely as a God who swayed and used other nations in the directing of history, but as a God whom nations other than Israel would come to worship. If one were trying to find evidence that Isaiah held the latter view, the first passage which would come to one's mind would probably be the familiar one of 2:2-4 which

describes the nations of the earth coming to the mountain of Yahweh and beating their implements of war into agricultural tools. Unfortunately there is some doubt that this passage is from Isaiah, and hence it is not a safe passage upon which to base conclusions. The fact that Micah 4:1-4 is a parallel passage complicates the question of authorship. The view that Micah was the original author and that Isaiah quoted it is improbable because Micah was the younger of the two contemporary prophets. If it were true, it would support the claim that Isaiah envisioned other nations becoming worshippers of Yahweh. The same may be said of a more widely held view that both Micah and Isaiah are quoting from an earlier prophet. More recent opinion, however, holds that the passage is not pre-exilic. This passage has similarities to Joel, and the now generally recognized late date for that prophecy makes it seem less probable that this passage is early. Cheyne also points out other indications of late date from the language used. (1)

There is, however, another more important passage to support the view of Isaiah's broad universalism. While Isaianic authorship of this passage is not wholly unquestioned, there are very strong arguments in its favor. The passage in question, 19:18-25, prophecies the setting up of an altar and a *massebah* to Yahweh in Egypt, which will result in the conversion of the Egyptians to Yahweh. Gray thinks that neither the style nor the ideas are Isaianic. He notes especially the frequent repetition of *Egypt* and *in that day* and the prominence of the ritual element. He also states, "The determination of date rests in the first place on the question whether the entire section is prophecy, or whether

(1) Cheyne: Introduction to Isaiah, pp.10-11

it is in part history clothed as prophecy. In the former case it seems easier to account for the prophecy of an altar (or rather in this case altars), and a massebah or massebahs to be erected in Egypt (v.19) before the publication of Deuteronomy (ch. 12; 16:22) than after; though the idea is not easily associated with pre-exilic prophecy. If the reference is to a particular altar and massebah already existing, no known facts explain the reference to the massebah, and the only known fact which might explain the allusion to the altar is the Temple at Leontopolis erected about 160 B.C." (1)

Cheyne holds that the passage was written by an Egyptian Jew perhaps about 270 B.C. His arguments against a later date are that, "...it seems highly improbable that a passage interpolated by an Egyptian Jew in the interests of Onias should have made its way into Palestine manuscripts of the book of Isaiah,...a comparatively early date enables us better to understand the mention of Hebrew as the language of the Jewries of Egypt." (2)

Condamin's arguments favoring the authenticity of the passage are difficult to controvert. He states, "It is improbable that after Deuteronomy had formally prohibited all massebahs as idolatrous (16:22), the symbol of the massebah would have been chosen to prophesy the future worship of Yahweh. 2. In the hypothesis of Duhm, it is necessary to descend to a very low epoch to explain vv. 23-25 in a fashion at all probable; and then for Assyria it is necessary to read Syria, an extremely doubtful identification, since even the name Συρία

(1) Gray: Isaiah, p.333
(2) Cheyne: Introduction to Isaiah, p.109

would be derived by an abbreviation from Ἀσσυρία . On the contrary, the contacts of Egypt, of Assyria, and of Judah around the year 700 could better than any other epoch, give occasion for a prophet such as Isaiah to announce the future conversion of the two great powers. 3.The expressions and the turns of phrase of 16-25 pronounce in favor of authenticity." (1)

In addition to these indications of universalism, evidence supporting Isaiah's monotheism may be found in the possibility of his holding a cosmic conception of God. One indication of this is found in the consecration vision of Isaiah in chapter 6, which is used as a standard in determining the genuineness of other passages. In the song of the seraphim there is the expression, "the whole earth is full of his glory." If this does not prove a cosmic conception on the part of Isaiah, it shows that Isaiah had such a large vision of God's majesty and glory that he paved the way for the cosmic idea.

There are other verses which indicate that Isaiah did more than pave the way. 17:7 states, "In that day shall men look to their Maker, and their eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel." Cheyne doubts the authenticity of this verse, but admits, "the phraseology is for the most part Isaianic." (2) His argument against its authenticity is that the use of Maker is late. For our purposes this argument can be disregarded. If the problem is to discover what theological ideas Isaiah had, it would be following a vicious circle to test the genuineness of passages by the very theological ideas whose origin we want to trace. Furthermore, Whitehouse has refuted Cheyne's

(1) Condamin: Le Livre d'Isaie, p.135
(2) Cheyne: Introduction to Isaiah, p.93

argument, when he points out, "No valid argument can be built on the single phrase his Maker... when it is remembered that the corresponding verb is employed at the opening of the pre-exilian Yahwistic cosmogony (Gen.ii.4)". (1) Cheyne's only further arguments against the genuineness of this passage are that the style is not bright, and that it interrupts the context. Whitehouse also denies these claims. He continues, "Nor can it be said that this passage constitutes any marked interruption to the sequence of thought. The following strophe, which is acknowledged to be genuinely Isaianic, and also begins with the same phrase 'in that day' sustains the same current of ideas."

Further evidence upon this question is derived from 29:16 which uses the metaphor of the potter and clay. Here again Whitehouse points to the pre-exilian creation account in Gen. 2 to support the early date of this idea. He calls attention to the fact that Gen.2:7 might suggest this metaphor. (2)

The cosmic conception also finds expression in Hezekiah's prayer in Isaiah 37:15. G.A.Smith says of this passage, "We have but to compare Hezekiah's prayer with the utterances of his predecessor Ahaz, to whom many gods were real, and none absolutely sovereign, or with the utterances of Israelites far purer than Ahaz, to whom the gods of the nations, though inferior to Jehovah, were yet real in existence, in order to mark the spiritual advance made by Israel under Isaiah." (3) The passage is very clearly monotheistic, it is true, but it is not so clear that this montheistic expression is directly attributable to

(1) Whitehouse: Isaiah, p.317
(2) Ibid, p.310
(3) Smith, G.A.: Isaiah i-xxxix, p.357

Isaiah. It comes from a period later than Isaiah, and it is unsafe to base conclusions upon Isaiah's theology upon it for that reason.

Another line of evidence favoring Isaianic monotheism is suggested by Skinner. He states, "Isaiah is a monotheist in the strictest sense of the term...if he never reasons on the subject of the divine unity, it is because the fact was too fundamental in his mind to admit of demonstration. He frequently speaks of idols as 'the work of men's hands' (ii.8,20; xvii.8; xxxi.7); his favorite designation for them is elilim (not-gods or 'nonentities') a word which he seems himself to have coined to express his sense of their unreality." (1) This word is used in eight verses, ii.8,18,20; x.10,11; xix.1,3; xxxi.7. Of these ii.8,18 and xix.1,3 are of unquestioned authenticity. The derivation of the word is not altogether certain, but it is generally agreed that it means nonentity. Cheyne points out that A.T.Clay has suggested that it is possibly a Babylonian loan-word, a shortened form of En-lil, the name of the great god of Nippur. He further shows the weakness of this theory in that neither Enlil or Elil is attested in the Old Testament as a god worshipped in Canaan. (2)

If the proof of Isaiah's monotheism cannot be called conclusive, the probabilities are greatly in its favor. An unquestioned contribution to the concept of Yahweh is found in Isaiah's favorite title for Him, the Holy One of Israel. Holiness is the characteristic of Yahweh which Isaiah emphasized above all others. Yahweh was to him the thrice holy God hymned by the seraphim in

(1) Skinner: Isaiah 1-39, p.xliv
(2) Cheyne: The Two Religions of Israel, p.299

the consecration vision. In his idea of Yahweh's holiness Isaiah built upon the foundation that Amos had laid in his insistence on Yahweh's righteousness. He put ethical content into an old designation of deity which did not previously carry that connotation. "(Qodesh) 'holiness' seems to have come from a root meaning 'sparation' or 'distance'. It did not express any special attribute of the divine nature but rather the general notion of godhead." (1) "Holy places, things, or times are such as are withdrawn from common use and appropriated to a religious purpose, and in like manner holiness, as ascribed to persons is no moral attribute; it refers only to the ritual separation from things common and unclean without which the worshipper dare not approach the divine presence. Holiness and immorality might even go side by side; the 'holy women' (kadeshot) of the Canaanite religion, found also in the popular Hebrew shrines, were Hierodouloi consecrated to immoral purposes." (2) It was into this term that Isaiah poured the ethical content of a lofty concept of Yahweh's righteousness. Badè states, "It must be accounted Isaiah's most distinguished service to the religion of Israel that he gave to Yahweh's holiness a fulness of ethical meaning which made it possible to say: 'The holy God shows Himself holy through righteousness.'" (3) In that verse we see that Isaiah defined holiness in terms of ethical righteousness.

The prominence of the ethical element in Isaiah's concept of Yahweh is not confined to his favorite term, holiness. It

(1) Skinner: Isaiah 1-39, p.xlv
(2) Smith: The Prophets of Israel, p.228
(3) Badè: The Old Testament in the Light of Today, p. 178

is also evident in his attitude toward the sacrificial cultus. This is exemplified in Isaiah 1:11-16. The sacrificial system is condemned by Isaiah as vigorously and vehemently as by Amos. Isaiah not only says that it is useless, but he also questions that Yahweh had ever authorized it. It is difficult to conceive of a stronger condemnation of it than the words which Isaiah puts into the mouth of Yahweh, "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary of bearing them." (1:14). It is not necessary to go into the controversial question of whether Isaiah condemned the sacrificial system unconditionally or merely condemned its use by people who were steeped in all manner of social sins. Even if we interpret him as merely condemning a hypocritical substitution of sacrificial ritual for righteous living, the fact remains that for Isaiah as for all the Eighth Century prophets the supreme emphasis was upon Yahweh's demand for righteousness.

This insistence upon the ethical demands of Yahweh is also to be seen in Isaiah's zeal for social reform. He is once more a follower of Amos in this important element of his message. His bitter invectives against greed, pride, graft, injustice, oppression of the poor, drunkenness and all the social evils of the corrupt period in which he lived are as brilliant, as uncompromising, as lofty in moral tone as the stern denunciations of his predecessor.

The other attribute of Yahweh which is especially emphasized by Isaiah is majesty. We have already noted the remarkable expression of this in the song of the seraphim. Here again Isaiah made a contribution by giving new ethical content to the term.

Badè cites 3:8-15 as evidence that "Isaiah ethicizes and spiritualizes the conception of Jahveh's glory in relation to man." (1)

The concept of Yahweh which we find in Isaiah is sometimes said to be defective in the quality of love and compassion. Skinner calls attention to the fact that Isaiah stresses the sterner aspects of Yahweh. He gives an extreme statement of this point of view. He says, "But Jehovah's message through Isaiah contains no note of yearning affection like that which melted the heart of Hosea. We search this writing in vain for such pathetic images as the husband seeking with pure and unselfish love to reclaim the unfaithful wife from a life of shame and misery, or the father teaching his child to walk, holding it by its arms." (2) While it must be admitted that Isaiah is inferior to Hosea in this respect, the compassionate element in Yahweh's character was not entirely overlooked. Jefferson notes the fact that in the very first chapter God is represented as a Father. (3) In this same chapter we have the familiar and beautiful promise of the scarlet sins which may be made white as snow. (1:18) Another passage which is almost matchless in Old Testament literature as a picture of tender care on the part of Yahweh is found in 31:5, "As birds hovering, so will Jehovah of hosts protect Jerusalem." There is a similarity in this figure to Jesus' lament over Jerusalem in Matt. 23:37. The beauty of the figure in Isaiah is somewhat obscured by the English translation. The Hebrew word depicts a small mother-bird. It must be

(1) Badè: The Old Testament in the Light of Today, p.182
(2) Skinner: Isaiah 1-39, p.1
(3) Jefferson: Cardinal Ideas of Isaiah, p.80

admitted, however, that these more compassionate aspects of Yahweh are only infrequently to be found in Isaiah. The emphasis upon that aspect in chapters 40-66 is one factor which points to different authorship of that section.

One aspect of Isaiah's concept of God, which has received little attention, is noted by Jefferson. It is that Isaiah conceived of God as rational. Jefferson states, "He is a thinking God, a God who reasons. He not only thinks himself but he wants his people to think...The first indictment which he brings against Judah and Jerusalem is that people do not think..." (1) As an illustration of this characteristic 1:18 is cited with its invitation, "Come, let us reason together." In this association of the characteristic of rationality with Yahweh Isaiah is perhaps influenced by Hosea. The latter attributes the sins of Israel to the fact that they fail to reason. Ephraim is a silly dove. (7:11). Duff states that, "It is a singular Hosean doctrine that the reasoner will always be righteous." (2) With the Hosean doctrine associating reasoning and righteousness, it is not strange that Isaiah should have thought of the Holy One of Israel as a rational deity.

Closely associated with the fact that Isaiah replaces the idea of a capricious deity with the idea of a rational God is Isaiah's concept of Yahweh as calm and serene rather than irascible and irritable. Badè calls attention to this element in Isaiah. He states, "If in his earliest prophecies there is occasionally in Yahweh's actions a suggestion of irritability, it is offset

(1) Jefferson: Cardinal Ideas of Isaiah, p.78
(2) Duff: Old Testament Theology, p.117

in the prophet's later years by the investment of the Holy One with that beautiful serenity which is the reflection into the heavens of Isaiah's own quiet faith in God." He calls attention to this element in 18:4, stating, "What apter symbols of divine tranquillity could there be than sunlit summer spaces and the seemingly stationary, high cirrus clouds from which the dew was believed to fall." (1) It is also found in 8:6, in which Yahweh is symbolized by "the waters of Shiloah that go softly."

Another element in Isaiah's concept of God is his teaching of God's spirituality. That Isaiah taught that God is Spirit is certainly a very important contribution. Smith calls attention to this element in Isaiah's teaching. He says of Job x.4 and Isaiah xxxi.3, "These passages are the clearest expressions of the spirituality of the godhead which the Old Testament contains, and you observe that they are not directed to distinguish between the true God and false gods, but to characterise the godhead in its difference from human nature." (2)

One further important contribution which Isaiah made to theology is the doctrine that Yahweh requires faith. Isaiah has sometimes been called the prophet of faith and rightly so. He not only voiced the great truth that faith is a religious requirement, but he also lived a life of faith. His life of unswerving devotion and unfaltering faith is an inspiring example that has few equals. Whitehouse states, "Faith in God is inculcated by Isaiah as it had never been taught previously. It is a new note in prophecy, and the occasion of its proclamation by the

(1) Badè: The Old Testament in the Light of Today, p.183
(2) Smith: The Prophets of Israel, p.61

prophet was the dramatic moment when he was confronted by the scheming politician Ahaz (vii.3 foll.)" (1) This doctrine of the necessity of faith is found in 7:9; 28:16: and 30:15. Badè says of this doctrine, "It seems natural that the creator of this reposeful conception of God should have been the first to set forth quiet trust in God as a religious requirement. It is the nearest approach in the Old Testament to the Christian idea of faith." (2) Micklem states, "Faith in the sense of walking by insight into eternal principles, a trusting in the character and purpose of God, had never before this moment, so far as we know, been required of the ordinary man or of the nation as a whole." (3)

(1) Whitehouse: Isaiah 1-39, p.57
(2) Badè: The Old Testament in the Light of Today, p.193
(3) Micklem: Prophecy and Eschatology, p.147

CHAPTER III. THE ESCHATOLOGY OF ISAIAH

Turning now from Isaiah's concept of God to his eschatological views, we find Isaiah again indebted to his great predecessor Amos. He repeats the latter's ideas concerning the Day of Yahweh. He also carries over, as Amos does, the element of cosmical catastrophe from the original primitive idea which seems to have its basis in mythology. The picture which Isaiah gives of the Day of Yahweh is found in chapter 2. It is painted in dark and terrible terms. Isaiah was not the first to give us this idea, but Jefferson states that he was the first to give it prominence in the history of religious thought. (1)

So dark is Isaiah's picture that some have contended that Isaiah was only a prophet of gloom and that he had no message of hope. There are other scholars who are convinced that Isaiah did have a brighter side to his message. Isaiah is believed by them to have had several characteristic doctrines which are hopeful. One of these is the doctrine of the remnant. The existence of this doctrine in Isaiah is derived first of all from the fact that Isaiah named his oldest son Shear-jashub which means "a remnant shall return". This name has been interpreted in various ways. Those who hold that Isaiah was only a prophet of doom interpret the name as a warning rather than a promise. It is equivalent, in their view, to "only a remnant shall return". The prophet is not holding out the future hope of those who will survive, but pointing to the pitifully few who will survive. Wade states that, "The 'return'

(1) Jefferson: Cardinal Ideas of Isaiah, p.181

meant was not restoration from captivity but conversion to holiness, for the prophet looked for a minority of the nation to escape the deportation into a foreign land which was the destined fate of the rest (i.27, iv.2)." (1)

In addition to the name of his son what passages do we have which throw light upon Isaiah's doctrine of the remnant? The word is of rather frequent occurence, but not all passages are universally acknowledged as Isaianic. In 1:9 there is an undoubtedly genuine reference which states that the fate of Judah would have been that of Sodom and Gomorrah, if Yahweh had not left a small remnant. Is there a possibility that in this verse Isaiah is teaching that Jerusalem was spared utter destruction because of a small number who were faithful to Yahweh? If this is a legitimate interpretation, it gives a basis for that much disputed doctrine of the inviolability of Jerusalem. When the story of Abraham's bargaining with Yahweh before the destruction of those cities is remembered , this seems a possibility. On the other hand, it may mean merely that the damage of Sennacherib's campaign was so great that the destruction was little short of that of the cities of the plain.

Another passage which gives added information concerning Isaiah's doctrine of the remnant is found in chapter 10. Buttenweiser believes that in 10:21-23 we have the misplaced explanation of the name Shear-jashub. He points out that they do not seem to be a continuation of v.20 which looks upon the destruction as a past event unlike 21-23 which place the destruction in the future. He also states that, "just as clearly, they cannot

(1) Wade: The Book of the Prophet Isaiah, p.xxxvii

have originally been a part of vv.24-27; for they have an ominous tone, emphasizing that the destruction is inexorably decreed, while vv. 24-27 are of an altogether reassuring nature..." (1) If this is genuinely Isaianic, and from the point of view of language and ideas there is no good reason to doubt its authenticity, it proves that the return was to be a conversion to holiness as has been suggested. Concerning the genuineness of these verses Condamin states, "Not only does one find here the thoughts of Isaiah but his expressions." (2)

One further point needs to be mentioned before we leave Isaiah's doctrine of the remnant. Isaiah made a real and important contribution in this doctrine. Fullerton states that Isaiah probably borrowed the idea from the popular eschatology of hope, but moralized it just as Amos did the doctrine of the Day of Yahweh. (3) J.M.P.Smith calls attention to the fact that this doctrine of the remnant in Isaiah "opened the way for the announcements of a blessed future from later prophets." (4) It is important to note that Isaiah is the first prophet who voiced the doctrine. It is not taught in Amos 3:12 which compares the rescue of the Israelites to the rescue of two legs or the piece of an ear snatched by a shepherd from a lion. H.P.Smith says of this verse, "There is here no thought of a remnant; what is sarcastically said to be rescued is not worth calling a remnant." (5) These are but the torn pieces used as an evidence of destruction as required by Ex. 3:22.

(1) Buttenwieser: Prophets of Israel, p.259
(2) Condamin: Le Livre d'Isaie, p.95
(3) Fullerton: "Viewpoints in the Discussion of Isaiah's Hopes for the Future" in Jour.Bib.Lit., v.41, p.36
(4) Smith, J.M.P.: "The Day of Yahweh" in Am.Jour.Theol., vol. 5, p.516
(5) Smith, H.P.: The Religion of Israel, p.137

A second doctrine of hope which is thought by some to be a part of Isaiah's theology is the doctrine of the inviolability of Jerusalem. This is one of the most disputed elements of the book of Isaiah. Fullerton has been one of the chief opponents of the view that Isaiah put forth the doctrine. His view assumes the legendary character of the Isaiah narratives in chapters 36-39. He holds that there was no marvelous deliverance of Jerusalem in 701 B.C. He states, "...in the Sennacherib period Isaiah was not triumphantly vindicated in his promises but was tragically vindicated in his threats." (1) This view is based on a rejection of the hopeful passages, which seem suspicious because of the abrupt change from doom to hope. A further point to support this view is that the "many nations" passages show a similarity to passages in Ezekiel, and they fit into a later period better for that reason. There are also passages which are very difficult to reconcile with a dogma of infallibility. One of these is 29:1ff. Fullerton says of it, "As a matter of fact, Isaiah as distinctly repudiates the dogma in the Ariel prophecy as Micah himself does." (2) Still another point is brought forward by Fullerton to support his views, a supposed psychological conflict and inconsistency. He states, "The anti-Assyrian party got complete control, repudiated the advice of Isaiah and formed an alliance with Egypt. Would Isaiah now turn around and, in face of complete apostasy, promise deliverance? It is unthinkable." (3)

Fullerton's able and thorough studies of Isaiah cannot be dismissed lightly by those who hold that Isaiah did teach a

(1) Fullerton: "Viewpoints in the Discussion of Isaiah's Hopes for the Future" Am. Jl. Lit., Vol. XL, p. 97
(2) Ibid, p. 58
(3) Ibid, p. 35

doctrine of inviolability. On the other hand, in some cases his views seem extreme, and he has a tendency to label passages later insertions on slim grounds if they do not fit his theories.

Wade is an exponent of the opposite view. He holds that Isaiah held the doctrine of inviolability for two reasons. "In the first place, the religious unit was still the collective nation, not the individual, so that the maintenance of the religion of Jehovah seemed bound up with the maintenance of Jewish independence." (1) The latter statement does not necessarily follow from the first. This view is difficult to reconcile with the doom passages which are undoubtedly from Isaiah. The second reason is not so open to criticism. It is that Zion's deliverance would demonstrate to the world the supremacy of Yahweh.

Skinner's view is more cautious. He says, "The prophet may not have held an unvarying view on this point, and it is possible that the doctrine of the inviolability of Jerusalem was not to his mind the hard and fast dogma which it has become in the hands of his commentators." (2) Micklem holds a similar view. He says, "On two particular occasions- during the Syro-Ephramite war certainly, during Sennacherib's attack possibly, we may be right to suppose that Isaiah asserted the city would not be taken; but the doctrine of the inviolability of Mt. Zion as a religious principle is, I believe, as little to be found in Isaiah as the doctrine of a

(1) Wade: The Book of the Prophet Isaiah, p.xxxvii
(2) Skinner: Isaiah 1-39, p.lxiii

supernatural destruction of the enemy at the gates of the city" (1)

In deciding between these conflicting views several facts should be taken into consideration. First, it must be admitted that the Isaiah narratives cannot be claimed to have historic accuracy. The reference to Tirhakah in II Kings 19:9 (Isaiah 37:9) in particular has been challenged. Reisner claims that the combination of Sennacherib, Hezekiah, and Tirhakah is an impossible one. (2) There seems to be strong evidence that Tirhakah was not king as early as 701 B.C. Nevertheless, it is also true that there must have been some historic basis for these narratives. Just what happened at Jerusalem on that historic occasion it is impossible to know with certainty, but it is difficult to explain the origin of these narratives without some sort of unusual deliverance as its basis in fact. It is significant that the Assyrian records omit any reference to a capture of Jerusalem. The Herodotus legend of a miraculous deliverance is also thought to support the Isaianic narrative.

Second, the psychological difficulty is not insuperable. It is impossible to demand absolute logical consistency from any man, because human nature is not so perfectly rational. Further, conditions sometimes so alter that it is the part of wisdom for a man to change his mind. Fullerton is aware of these facts, but makes much of the psychological difficulty while frankly stating he does not demand complete logical consistency. However, is it so certain that in attributing to Isaiah a promise of deliverance at the time of Sennacherib's

(1) Micklem: Prophecy and Eschatology, p.174
(2) Reisner: "Recent Discoveries in Ethiopia" in Harvard Theol. Revue, vol.13, pp.41-42

invasion we would be ascribing to him inconsistency? If there is any historic basis at all in the taunt which is ascribed to the Assyrian Rabshakeh in the Biblical narrative, it is entirely probable that Isaiah would assert his faith that Yahweh would not allow the Assyrians to take the city. We do not know enough about the facts to state dogmatically what attitude Isaiah might have taken under the conditions.

Third, in the time of Jeremiah there was a widespread confidence in the inviolability of Jerusalem. This belief, which Jeremiah bitterly opposed, is more easily explained if Isaiah had promised that the city would not be taken during the Sennacherib invasion and the city had actually been spared.

Fourth, there are passages in Isaiah which seem to support the theory, but it is just those passages which are labeled spurious by those who hold that Isaiah did not teach that Jerusalem was inviolable. They reject some passages because they attribute to the city a cult sanctity which is difficult to reconcile with Isaiah's general scorn of the sacrificial cultus. Other passages are suspicious because of the abrupt change from the note of stern warning to comforting reassurance. These passages so completely cancel the doom which Isaiah threatens that it is difficult to credit them to him. Chapter 10, which is one of the most important for this problem, is an excellent illustration of this; 29:5-8 also cancels the doom of 29:1-4, and 31:4-9 that of 31:1-3. There is also the difficulty of the passages which are uncompromising in their note of doom. The Ariel prophecy of chapter 29 has already been mentioned. Chapter 8 is another example, but it is dated at an earlier

period and is concerned with another crisis. On the other hand, there remain some passages favorable to the inviolability theory which are not easily discounted. An important verse of this type is 14:32. Fullerton gives strong arguments favoring the genuineness of this passage with the exception of 30a and 32b. The grounds for his rejection of the latter are, "the parallel line to 32a is missing, and the first clause itself is obscurely expressed." (1) Chapter 22, which is best dated in 701 B.C. gives some evidence of Isaiah's attitude at that time. Verse 2 of this chapter implies that Isaiah advised fighting the Assyrians rather than surrender to the Assyrian demands. This implies that Isaiah had confidence that the city would not be taken.

Out of all the conflicting evidence the safest conclusion seems to be a compromise view such as Skinner and Nicklem propose. Until new evidence gives us more definite information, one may hold the view that Isaiah did promise deliverance to Jerusalem in 701 B.C., and that the promise of Isaiah was the basis of a dogma of inviolability which was developed later. This dogma probably did not originate with Isaiah, but it may have originated not long after his time under the influence of a fulfilment of his prophecy of deliverance. One further bit of evidence to support this view is the rise of the Deuteronomic school with its emphasis upon the cultic sanctity of Jerusalem.

(1) Fullerton: "Isaiah 14:28-32" in Am. Jour. Sem. Lang., vol. 42, p. 108

CHAPTER IV. THE DOCTRINE OF THE MESSIAH.

One further doctrine of Isaiah's eschatology remains to be considered, the doctrine of the Messiah. It is important enough to warrant a separate chapter. If the Messianic hope began with Isaiah, as some scholars hold, it was his major contribution to theology because of its great influence. Rogers states that Isaiah's doctrine of the Messiah had the greatest influence on later ages and the greatest significance for them. (1) Of all the elements in Isaiah none has aroused more controversy than the question of the Isaianic authorship of the Messianic sections. There is still no consensus of opinion concerning them.

This doctrine is found chiefly in four passages: 7:14; 9:1-7; 11:1-5; and 32:1-4. The first of these is now by many scholars no longer considered to be Messianic, and the other three are by some believed to belong to an age later than the time of Isaiah. The first passage to be considered is the familiar sign of Immanuel. Scholars are not agreed upon the interpretation of this passage. There are several points concerning it which may be regarded as established. The first is that the word almah does not necessarily mean virgin. It signifies a young woman of marriageable age whether married or single. It is also clear that almah cannot refer to the mother of Hezekiah, the only wife of Ahaz of whom we have any knowledge. Hezekiah was already born at the time of the interview when the sign was given. It is equally clear that it cannot be a reference to the wife of Isaiah, since the word would not be appropriate

(1) Rogers: "Isaiah" in Abingdon Bible Commentary, p. 639

for the mother of Shear-jashub, and there is no evidence that he was married twice.

The most satisfactory explanation seems to be that it was an indication of time. There are many variations of this explanation. Some hold that the Immanuel sign means that the Syro-Ephraimite danger will soon be over, and that young mothers will give that name to their children in gratitude for the deliverance. Others, concentrating their attention on the verses which follow, see in the sign only the threat of an Assyrian invasion. Still others attempt to combine the two elements by the theory that what Isaiah said is that children named Immanuel because of the deliverance from the Syro-Ephraimite invasion will grow up in a land desolated by the Assyrians. Kraeling brings some pertinent objections to this theory. He states, "In the first place we have no right to assume that Isaiah used Immanuel ironically....Furthermore, an involved sentence of the kind assumed in Guthe's rendering would be anomalous in Hebrew diction." (1) The difficulty is caused by v.15, which contains the threat of invasion in the child's diet of curds and honey, the typical nomadic fare. The omission of this verse gives the passage a clearer and more consistent meaning. Kraeling gives cogent arguments for considering it an insertion which may have crept in as a marginal gloss. (2) Gray eliminates the contradiction in another way. He denies that curds and honey imply a threat. He points out that these were valued foods and that the land

(1) Kraeling: "The Immanuel Prophecy" in Jour. Bib. Lit., vol. 50, p.285

(2) Ibid, p.297

of promise in which the Hebrews were to leave their nomadic life was often referred to as a "land flowing with milk and honey". (1)

Whether the sign was a promise or a threat, no interpretation of the sign is complete which omits consideration of the reference in 8:8. It is on the basis of this verse that Driver interprets the sign of Immanuel as Messianic. (2) On its face value the verse seems to refer to Immanuel as the owner of the land. Gray points out that the verse may mean either "thy land, God is with us" or "thy land, O Immanuel". He warns, "To base a far reaching construction of Messianic belief on so ambiguous a passage is a mistake." (3) Fullerton points out that if one construes Immanuel as a phrase instead of a proper name the difficulty is not entirely removed because of the personal pronoun "thy" which is then left dangling. It cannot well refer to Judah, as has been suggested, because Judah has been referred to in the third person in 8:5-8a. He says that Popper explains this by transferring it to a position following 7:10-14,16. Fullerton does not agree with his interpretation of the sign as ironical. He suggests that the verses 8b-10 be transferred to the neighborhood of 7:1-9, which will make the person addressed Ahaz. (4) His arguments that the verses are out of place in their present context are convincing, and they are more easily interpreted as a part of the Immanuel sign.

Before leaving the Immanuel prophecy mention should be

(1) Gray: Isaiah, vol. 1, pp. 129-130
(2) Driver: The Life and Times of Isaiah, p. [illegible]
(3) Op. cit., p. 149
(4) Fullerton: "The Interpretation of Isaiah 8:5-10" in Jour. Bib. Lit., Vol. 43, pp. 220-2

made of the theory of Gressmann who interprets the sign Messianically. He bases this belief on the hypothetical existence in Judah of a myth prophesying the coming of a wonderful child who was to be the deliverer of his people. This theory has received a great deal of attention but has not gained general acceptance. This Messianic interpretation of the Immanuel sign returns to the older idea of a miraculous birth being implied in the sign. Those who hold the theory stress the fact that the definite article is used with the word almah. The food of the child, curds and honey, is also interpreted as an indication of the divine character of Immanuel, who is to deliver his people when five years of age.

Gray offers the following pertinent criticism of Gressmann's theory, "This theory and all theories that detect the influence of mythology here start from an alleged but unreal necessity for satisfying two conditions of which the text says nothing: it is assumed that there must be something miraculous here, though the text speaks merely of a sign, and that the child must be a deliverer, whereas the text neither says nor implies anything of the kind; and, indeed, the passive tense in v. 16 is altogether unfavorable to the assumption that Judah will be delivered by Immanuel." (1)

Barton refutes the claim that the food of the child implies that Immanuel was a divine being. He points out that in the Paradise story of Gen. 3 it is not milk and honey but the fruit of a tree which makes man divine. Likewise in the Babylonian

(1) Op. cit., p. 126

Adapa myth it is "food and water" not milk and honey which might have gained immortality for Adapa. Therefore he concludes that milk and honey formed no part of the Paradise myth among the Semites. (1)

Micklem presents additional cogent arguments against this theory. He states, "First, no good sense remains for ver. 17... Second, what is the connection between the name Shear-jashub, unquestionably a key word of Isaiah's preaching, and this new Messianic doctrine? Third, if Gressmann is right, then Isaiah's prophecy and expectation most certainly was not fulfilled, as he supposed, in the immediate future. Are we to suppose that he went about henceforth utterly discredited in his own eyes and those of the people? Fourth, this passage is preceded by the inaugural vision, followed by the prophecy of Maher-shalalhash-baz, both involving prophecies of doom...Fifth, it is noticeable that the overthrow of the national enemies is not to be the work of the Messiah: it will take place during his infancy...Sixth, this confident and unconditional expectation of the speedy arrival of the Messiah is wholly inconsistent with Isaiah's fundamental and reiterated doctrine of faith...Finally, it is an entirely unproved assumption that expectations of the birth of a supernatural Messiah were at this time current in Jerusalem." (2)

Burney offers evidence which he holds supports the theory that there was a Messianic hope in Isaiah's time, but Micklem is justified in stating it is still without definite proof. Burney's arguments for it are that there were no limits set to

(1) Barton: "Milk" in Hastings Encyc. Rel. and Ethics, vol. 8, p.636
(2) Micklem: Prophecy and Eschatology, pp.149-150

to the choice of Ahaz; the exceptional circumstances of the births of Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Joseph, Samson, and Samuel, the providential preservation of Moses and its parallel in the Sargon of Agade story, Micah 5:2ff., and the force of the definite article used with almah.(1) Concerning the reference in Micah there is no general agreement that the passage is pre-exilic; hence it is not very strong evidence.

Skinner offers the following arguments in favor of Gressmann's theory, "It satisfies the claims of a truly historical interpretation, and at the same time it accounts as none of the modern theories do for the impassioned fervour, the indefinable atmosphere of mystery and emotion with which the words are surrounded...Not the least of its recommendations, indeed, is the fact that it brings this prophecy into line with the other great Messianic prophecies of ix.1-7 and xi.1ff.; and if the last words of ch. viii.8 are rightly rendered 'thy land , O Immanuel' (which, however, has been disputed..) a link would be supplied which would make the proof almost irresistible, since no ordinary child, born or unborn, could be naturally apostrophised as the owner of the land." (2) This last argument does not offer such convincing proof to those scholars who interpret Immanuel as a son to be born to the king, for it would be natural to call a son of Ahaz owner of the land, since this son might some day be the ruler of the land. According to other interpretations also the argument is far from irresistible, since "thy land" may not imply ownership but may merely be a patriotic expression, the

(1) Burney: "The Sign of Immanuel" in Jour. Theol. Studies, vol. 10, p.511

equivalent of "thy fatherland".

If 9:1-7 is genuinely Isaianic, it might strengthen the Messianic interpretation of the Immanuel sign, but the fact that there are many scholars who believe 9:1-7 post-exilic vitiates Skinner's argument. A further difficulty is found by Mitchell. He holds that the child of 9:6 cannot be identified with Immanuel because his birth was to be coincident with the appearance of the Assyrians in Palestine. (1)

Concerning the genuineness of 9:1-7 the evidence is rather inconclusive. Micklem states, "But on theological grounds we can say with confidence that unless Isaiah's mind changed altogether in the course of his ministry, he cannot have written this passage." The basis for this contention is that the Messianic ideal is inconsistent with Isaiah's doctrine of complete faith in Yahweh as the way of salvation. Gray states,"...the language is such that it might equally well, so far as we know, have been employed in the 8th century or much later.." (3) Kennett argues a late date from the word used for boot in this passage. He states, "Now high nailed boots were a characteristic of Macedonian soldiery, and were still worn by the Syrian soldiers in the second century.. Isaiah in speaking (v.27) of the equipment of the Assyrians uses the ordinary Hebrew word for shoe." (4) The cogency of Kennett's argument is questioned by other writers. Whitehouse states, "The unusual word for military shoe or boot...is not a late Aramaic word, but a loan-word imported in the lifetime of Isaiah from

(1) Mitchell: Isaiah: A Study of Chapters i-xii, p.210
(2) Micklem: Prophecy and Eschatology, p. 157
(3) Gray: Isaiah, vol.1, p. 166
(4) Kennett: The Composition of the Book of Isaiah, p.71

Assyria." (1) There are also grave objections for assuming any of the book of Isaiah is from the Maccabean period.

Cheyne lists six objections to Isaianic authorship of this passage. They are, "(1) The description of the Messianic glory stands in no apparent connection with the present circumstances of Judah, and contains no reference to an accompnaying moral regeneration of the people. (2) The divine 'king in his glory' so filled the thoughts and imagination of Isaiah that there seems no room for any earthly king. Zion's foundation stone (xxviii.16) is not the Davidic family but Yahwè, the God who has revealed himself to Israel. (3) If Isaiah had delivered such prophecies as ix.1-6, xi.1-8, why does he never refer to them again? (4) Why do neither Jeremiah nor II Isaiah, who knew Isaiah so well, refer to these great prophecies? And why does Zechariah (i-viii) refer only to Jeremiah's prophecy of the נֵצֶר (Zech. iii.8, vi.12)? (5) V.3 refers to Gideon's discomfiture of Midian. But the other references to traditional stories in reputed Isaianic prophecies (including x.26) turn out to be probably not Isaianic at all...(6) The prophecy ix.1-6 lacks Isaiah's lucidity. Who is the king?" (2)

The first of Cheyne's objections, the difficulty of finding a historic background in the life of Isaiah for this passage, is one which applies equally to other Messianic passages in Isaiah. It is a difficulty which must be admitted. On the other hand, it is also true that it is difficult to find a historic background in a later period. Many scholars place the passage in the period of Haggai and Zechariah. Aytoun offers the following criticism

(1) Whitehouse: Isaiah, p.166
(2) Cheyne: Introduction to the Book of Isaiah, p.45

of assigning either 9:1-7 or 11:1-10 to that date, "If either or both of these prophecies were promulgated before Haggai and Zechariah, it is difficult to understand how these prophets could have connected such a person as Zerubbabel with so exalted and wonderful a being as is depicted in them. On the other hand, it is extremely unlikely that there would be a revival, in so noble a form, of any kind of royalist hopes until long after the Zerubbabel fiasco had become a thing of the past and the memory of it practically obliterated." (1) Whitehouse also finds objections to that theory. He questions that these passages are really parallel ot the Messianic passages of Haggai and Zechariah. He states, "If we were concerned with Hag. ii.21-23 only, and without reference to the historic situation, a specious argument might be advanced, but the Zechariah passages dispel the illusion." (2) He calls attention to the fact that Joshua, the High Priest, is given as much prominence as Zerubbabel.

Kennett assigns this passage to the Maccabaean period, finding in it a refernce to the rejoicing in Jerusalem in May 141 B.C., the passage being a tribute to Simon. He states, "After the time of the Samaritan schism the absence of any mention of Samaria would be natural in a thanksgiving for the restoration of Jehovah's people. But from this date onwards there is but one period, the Maccabaean, which could in any way warrant such an outburst of praise as we find in this chapter." (3) This may be true, but is does not prove that the passage is not from a period <u>prior</u> to the Samaritan schism. Gray points out the

(1) Aytoun: "Rise and Fall of the 'Messianic Hope' in the Sixth Century" in Jour. Bib. Lit., vol.20, p.41
(2) Whitehouse: Isaiah, p.153
(3) Kennett: "The Prophecy of Isaiah ix.1-7" in Jour. Theol. Studies, vol. 7, p.328

weaknesses of Kennett's theory. He states, "In addition to the general objection to assuming a Maccabaean origin for any parts of the book of Isaiah...this theory rests on several very questionable assumptions; (1) that 8:23 (9:1) is a part of the poem; (2) that the name given to the prince implies a warrior; (3) that the boots of v.4 must be the boots of Greek soldiery; (4) that the child of v.5 is not a child, as such, but the offspring given to the nation, to wit, Simon." (1)

Cheyne's second objection is more easily disposed of than the one with which we have already dealt. It is true that Isaiah's chief interest is so centered in Yahweh that there seems little room for a Messiah. In the one passage of an ideal future which seems beyond question to be Isaiah's, 1:24ff., there is no reference to an ideal king. This does not mean that Isaiah could not have held the idea of a king reigning as God's vice-regent. Furthermore, the passage which Cheyne cites to support this view is precarious, since the foundation stone is interpreted by some scholars as a Messianic reference and not a reference to Yahweh. Fullerton says of it, "the ancient identification of the stone with the Messiah still remains the best guess." (2) He bases this conclusion on the following arguments: the stone is to laid in the future, it is an objective concrete reality, faith is to be reposed in the stone, and the cornerstone is an appropriate symbol for a Messianic king. He assigns the passage to a period later than Isaiah because of its incongruity with its context, consolation not

(1) Gray: Isaiah, vol. 1, p.168
(2) Fullerton: "The Stone of the Foundation" in Am. Jour. Sem. Lang., vol. 37, p.33

being expected in a passage addressed to Isaiah's opponents, and also its connection with later literature, e.g. Job 38:6, Jer.51:26, Zech.10:3ff., Psa.113:22, Dan.2:45, and Zech. 3:8ff.

This second objection of Cheyne is associated with the general theory that Isaiah's hopes were centered on a religious community rather than political influence or the royal Davidic house. Whitehouse points out that, 'this does not exclude political organization within Judah itself resting on the presence and power of Yahweh. The part played by Isaiah during the invasion of Sennacherib...is hardly consistent with the attitude of an unbeliever in political organization." (1)

The third and fourth objections of Cheyne are more serious, and they may be considered together since they are closely related. Concerning the latter Gray states, "It is urged that no echo of the passage is found in Jer., Ezek., Isaiah 40-66. This is correct but inconclusive." (2) It is always precarious to base conclusions on an argument de silentio. Whitehouse also cites the reference to a Davidic king in Jer. xxx.9 and Ezek. xxxix.23-25 in refutation of the claim that Jeremiah and Ezekiel were unfamiliar with the passage.

These two objections of Cheyne like the first two are general objections to the idea that the Messianic hope arose as early as the Eighth Century B.C. Aytoun gives a most convincing and clear argument for this view. His first point is that Isaiah considered the Davidic succession degenerate and cites Isaiah 7:13 as evidence for this. This reference, which indicates Isaiah's attitude in the time of Ahaz, need

(1) Whitehouse: Isaiah, p.152
(2) Gray: Isaiah, Vol. 1, p.166

not necessarily imply that Isaiah held that attitude in other periods of his career. Aytoun also asserts that Jeremiah and Ezekiel shared Isaiah's distrust of the Davidic dynasty. He cites Jer. 13:13; 22:1f.,24,30, and Ezekiel 17:9; 19:11,14 as evidence of this. He then points out that in Ezek. 34 Yahweh Himself is to be the agent of the restoration of the people. This is true of a large part of the chapter, but in 34:23,24 there is a Messianic reference, which would have to be regarded as a later insertion to fit Aytoun's theories. The next important passage is Ezek. 43:5-9. He says of it, "Provision is however made by Ez. in his ideal scheme for a civil administrator called a 'Nasi'(נָשִׂיא). The title of 'king' is carefully withheld from this person...It is perfectly clear that Ezekeiel has no thought of portraying a 'Messiah', in the technical meaning of the term, in his designation of this functionary who was apparently necessary to the nation's life but liable to abuse his position...He is neither a divinely anointed king, nor a heaven-sent Deliverer." (1) Jer.33:25,26, Ezek.45:17 as well as Hosea 3:5 and Jer. 30:7,8 are considered later additions in order to harmonize them with this theory. On the whole Aytoun's arguments are difficult to set aside. The chief weaknesses are that more passages than those referred to already would have to be eliminated as later additions in order to support the theory and also the Messianic hope appears rather suddenly and without much previous foundation. This difficulty applies to all theories which limit the growth of the Messianic idea to the post-exilic period.

(1) Aytoun: "Rise and Fall of the Messianic Hope in the Sixth Century" in Jour. Bib. Lit., vol.20,pp.30-31

The last two objections of Cheyne, unlike the first four, are specific rather than general. They apply only to the passage in question, 9:1-7. They are not conclusive, nor even weighty. That other references to traditional stories in Isaiah are not genuine does not prove that Isaiah could not or did not refer to Gideon's victory over Midian. The objection that the passage lacks lucidity is inconclusive because there are other genuinely Isaianic passages which are not lucid, some being even cryptic. As evidence of this we need only to read the variety of interpretations and wide differences of opinion concerning them.

Before leaving this passage, one more specific objection to its early date should be considered. Whitehouse states the objection and also answers it in the following quotation, "The phrase, 'jealous zeal of Yahweh' (ix.7) is said to be a later expression, and was first employed by Ezekiel...But though this is in the main true, the employment of the word a century earlier by Isaiah is surely quite admissable." (1)

There remains one more general consideration which deserves mention. Some scholars hold that Isaiah gave no Messianic message because he was not a prophet of hope. This argument is not a serious obstacle. Isaiah's doctrine of the remnant gave a basis for hope and his long career would have been psychologically impossible without hope as Barton points out. (2) It is also worthy of note that Isaiah was outstanding as a prophet of faith, and faith and hope are closely related.

Of the next passage, 11:1-9, the chief argument against a pre-exilic date, aside from the general objections already

(1) Whitehouse: Isaiah, p.152
(2) Barton: "The Hermeneutic Canon 'Interpret Historically' in the Light of Modern Research" in Jour. Bib. Lit., vol. [illegible], [illegible].

considered, is that it seems to imply that there has been an end-to the house of David. That seems to be the most natural interpretation of the first verse. This difficulty is not insuperable. Barton says that the word denoting the stump of a felled tree may equally well denote a tree with the limbs lopped off for fire-wood, which is an old Palestinian custom according to him. (1) Peters does away with the difficulty in another way. He suggests that the cutting down of the Davidic dynasty may be a reference to the destruction of the seed royal by Athaliah when only Joash was saved. (2) Cheyne investigates the linguistic evidence upon the date. This is rather inconclusive, the few words which he points to as late being very rare either in early or late passages. (3)

Of the remaining passage, 32:1-5, Micklem states, "It is the one 'Messianic' passage which without improbability might be ascribed to Isaiah." (4) In this opinion he reverses the conclusions of other scholars. Conservative scholars who argue for the genuineness of the other two passages admit that this one may have been touched by the hand of an editor. While the evidence is not wholly conclusive, it is more convincing for a late date. For all three passages the genuineness is not disproved, but there is sufficient doubt to make one cautious concerning claims of Isaiah's contribution to the doctrine of the Messiah.

A brief discussion of the theories of the origin of the

(1) Ibid, p.73
(2) Peters: "Notes on Isaiah" in Jour. Bib. Lit., vol.39, p.91
(3) Cheyne: Introduction to the Book of Isaiah, p.64
(4) Micklem: Prophacy and Eschatology, p.160

Messianic idea may assist in trying to discover if it was possible for Isaiah to have written these Messianic passages. Gressmann's mythological theory of its origin has already been mentioned. L.B.Smith gives a thorough discussion of this theory and points out its weaknesses. She states, "Gressmann suggests the possibility of a connection between the Adapa myth and a Paradise King, but the fragments of the tale which have come down to us merely tell how Adapa failed to aquire immortality. The theory of his reign as king, Gressmann bases on the very uncertain identification of Adapa with the second of Berossos's early kings, Alaparos, and on an inscription of Sennacherib in which, according to Gressmann, the king once calls himself 'the second Adapa'." (1)

The effort of Large and Breasted to find an Egyptian Messianic mythology is no more convincing. "...there is no suggestion that Ra might return or that the blessings of his reign would be repeated." (2) The further suggestion of Gressmann that the Messianic hope might have arisen in Canaanite mythology as the figure of Melchizedek might indicate can neither be proved nor disproved with our present knowledge of Canaanite mythology. (3)

Fullerton also discusses the evidences for Gressmann's theory and its weaknesses. He points out Gressmann's contribution in showing the mythological origin of the eschatology of doom. He continues,"...the genuineness of the hopeful prophecies in Isaiah is not thereby proved. It is quite

(1) Smith,L.B.: "The Messianic Ideal of Isaiah" in Jour. Bib. Lit., vol.56, p.195
(2) Ibid, p.196
(3) Ibid, p.196

conceivable that Isaiah may have adopted the eschatology of ddom without at the same time adopting the eschatology of hope... The eschatology of hope has not been made moral and historical in any such degree as the eschatology of doom...Finally, the contradiction between the eschatology of doom and the eschatology of hope in the present prophecies remains- a contradiction which Gressmann admits." (1) Fullerton calls attention to the highly speculative character of Gressmann's theory. It is clever and ingenious, but until stronger evidence is forthcoming must be regarded as hypothetical.

Oesterley also advocates a mythological origin for the Messianic hope. He holds that it developed in Israel from mythological ideas common to all mankind. He postulates the existence of three main myths. The first is the Tehom myth. Amos 9:3-6, Isa.30:7; 27:1; 51:9,10; Psa. 74:12-15; 89:9-10; Job 26:12,13 and 40:25-41:26 are cited as evidence of this myth among the Hebrews. The following quotation makes clear what the Tehom myth means. "Tehom, identified with the watery chaos which existed before the creation of the world, was a great primeval sea-monster; there was a conflict between Tehom and Jahwe, in which the former was defeated but not finally destroyed; Tehom was also inimical to men; there was an essential identity between Tehom, Leviathan, Rahab, the Serpent, and the Dragon; and the Sea which was her abode is also sometimes identified with her." (2) The second myth postulated by Oesterley is the Yahweh myth. He cites Gen. 2:5-7,19; Isa. 51:9-11; Psa. 65:7,8; 74:13-17; 89:6-19; and 104:5-9 as

(1) Fullerton;"The Book of Isaiah" in Harvard Theol. Revue, vol. 6, p. 508

(2) Oesterley: The Evolution of the Messianic Idea, p.57

evidence for the Yahweh myth. By this he means that Yahweh was a type of Heilbringer or Savior-Hero. Yahweh is a form of Bel or Marduk who overcame Tiamat or Tehom. The third is the Paradise or Golden Age myth. Gen.2:8-3:1, Psa. 48:2-4, Ezek. 28:13-15, Isa. 2:2-4; 11:1-9, and 35:1-10 are the references for the existence of this myth among the Hebrews.

Barton discusses Oesterley's theory. The following quotation points to the chief weakness in the hypothesis. "In Oesterley's view the Messianic figure in Isa. 2:2-4a, 4:2b, 9:5,6 and 11:1-5 is a transformation of the Heilbringer or Yahweh myth, a conspicuous example of which is the Babylonian Marduk of the Creation epic...It is easy to see that sometimes in the O.T. the myths of Marduk are applied to Yahweh, but this does not explain the figure of the Messiah, who is in the Biblical material always distinct from Yahweh." (1) L.B.Smith also calls attention to this weak link in Oesterley's chain of logic. She states, "But the expectation that an illustrious king (at least partly human) should sit triumphantly on David's throne seems hardly a logical development from an expectation that Jahveh would rule the world- especially among a people like the Israelites who did not deify their heroes (cf. legends of the patriarchs)." (2)

The other theory of the source of the Messianic hope is that it arose out of the past history of the Israelites. It was looking for a restoration of the glories of the time of David and Solomon by a member of that dynasty. Was this type

(1) Barton: "The Hermeneutic Canon 'Interpret Historically' in the Light of Modern Research" in Jour. Bib. Lit., vol.33, p.71

(2) Smith: "The Messianic Ideal of Isaiah" in Jour. Bib. Lit., vol.36, p.197

of hope possible as early as the time of Isaiah? L.B.Smith offers the following evidence in favor of the view, "The J and E sections of the books of Samuel and Kings which received nearly their present form in the eighth century, bear witness that the reigns of Saul, of David, and especially that of Solomon were then being idealized and thought of in terms of the world empire of Assyria. A study of these stories reveals, emphasized in them, those characteristics which Isaiah [illegible] in his ideal ruler." (1)

If Isaiah was the author of these Messianic passages in the book bearing his name, what kind of a Messiah was he picturing? Was he looking for an ideal but wholly human ruler of the Davidic dynasty, as the above quotation indicates? Was he looking for a superhuman and heavenly being as the mythological theories postulate? In spite of the exalted language applied to the wonderful child of 9:6 the former seems to be the correct interpretation of these passages, whoever their author. The four titles of this child must not be interpreted by what they connote to the modern occidental mind, but by what they meant to the ancient mind of the orient. The lofty titles which were given to Egyptian, Assyrian, and Babylonian monarchs warn us against reading into these titles of 9:6 a claim of divinity. "...when the prophet says that the coming king is going to be called 'Mighty God' and 'Everlasting Father', he is simply saying that the highest titles ever worn by the Assyrian or Egyptian kings will be given to him..." (2) A further reason

(1) Ibid, p.198
(2) Jefferson: Cardinal Ideas of Isaiah, p.154

for not building up a theory of a supernatural Messiah upon this verse is that the phrases translated "mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" are not found in the Vatican manuscript of the Septuagint and some other manuscipts. (1)

We are forced to leave the question of Isaiah's contribution to theology a question mark so far as his doctrine of a Messiah is concerned. The last word concerning that problem has yet to be written. Further investigation is needed before we can consider the question of the authorship of the Messianic passages proved or disproved.

(1)Berry: "Messianic Predictions" in Jour. Bib.Lit., vol. 45,

CONCLUSION

The evidence upon the question of Isaiah's monotheism is inconclusive, although it seems stronger than that upon which it is claimed that Isaiah was the first to predict the Messiah. The evidence favoring Isaiah's monotheism consists of his universalism, traces of a cosmic concept of [illegible], and especially his use of elilim.

The conclusions concerning Isaiah's contribution to the idea of God upon which there would be general agreement are that Isaiah enlarged the concept of God by his teaching of Yahweh's majesty and holiness, that he pictured Yahweh as a rational and righteous God instead of a capricious and irascible deity to be appeased by sacrifices. [illegible] emphasize the compassionate nature of Yahweh, but he does not entirely omit it. He was one of the first to teach that Yahweh is spirit. He was the first to set forth faith as a religious requirement. This doctrine of faith laid the foundation for his constructive doctrine of the remnant. In this he went beyond Amos who was a prophet of doom. In general, Isaiah built upon the foundations of Amos and Hosea, but he developed their ideas.

Isaiah is often said to have as one of his cardinal doctrines the dogma of the inviolability of Jerusalem. It is probably true that at the time of Sennacherib's invasion he believed that the city would not be taken, but it is also probable that the dogma of inviolability grew up later than the time of Isaiah. Concerning the doctrine of the Messiah

one cannot speak dogmatically. If Isaiah was the author of the Messianic passages, his greatest contribution was the doctrine of the Messiah. There is no definite proof that he did not write these passages, but many scholars reject them; hence one must await further evidence before reaching a final conclusion.

Isaiah contributed to theology by adding to the ideas of his predecessors the spark of his own genius. By his literary and rhetorical ability, by the depth of his devotion to Yahweh and the warmth of his prophetic ardor, he gave new force and vitality to their messages. This factor is one which cannot be weighed or measured, but it is important. When one adds that factor to the evidences of deeper insight into spiritual truth and his exalted concept of God, one is inclined to agree with those who hold that Isaiah ben Amoz was the greatest of the Old Testament prophets.

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